Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

AP World History; Ms. Hulme

**Slavery and Human Society**

*Directions*: *After reading the passage, answer the corresponding questions on another sheet of paper in full sentences*.

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| Slavery is a very old and widespread institution. It has been found at different times all over the globe, among simple societies and in the great centers of civilization. In some of these societies, it has been a second form of labor, whereas in others it became the predominant labor form or “mode of production”. The need for labor beyond the individual or the family unit is very old, and as soon as authority, law, or custom could be established to set the conditions for coercion, the tribe, the state, the priests, or some other groups or institution took labor by force. Coerced [forced] labor could take different forms. There are important distinctions between indentured servants, convicted laborers, debt-peons, and chattel slaves.  Although most societies placed some limits on the slave-holder’s authority or power, the denial of the slave’s control or over his or her own labor and life choices was a characteristic of this form of coercion throughout history. In most societies that had a form of chattel slavery, the slave was denied a sense of belonging in the society.  Because slaves became nonpersons—or, as one modern author has put it, because they suffered a “social death”—it was always easier to enslave “other” or “outsiders”: those who were different in some ways. Hebrews enslaved Canaanites, Greeks enslaved “barbarians,” and Muslims made slaves of nonbelievers. If the difference between slave and master was readily seen, it made enforcement of slave status that much easier. Racism as such did not cause modern slavery, but differences in culture, language, color, and other physical characteristics always facilitated enslavement. The familiarity of European Europeans and Muslims with black Africans in an enslaved status contributed to the development of modern racism. To paraphrase English historian Charles Boxer, no people can enslave another for 400 years without developing an attitude of superiority.  Slavery was not only a general phenomenon that existed in many societies. Rarely questioned on any grounds, it was seen as a necessary and natural phenomenon. Slavery is accepted in the texts of ancient India, the Old Testament, and the writings of classical Greece. Aristotle specifically argued that some people were born to rule and others to serve. In Christian theology, although all people might be free in spirit in the kingdom of God, servitude was considered a necessary reality. Voices might be raised arguing for fair treatment or against the enslavement of a particular group, but the condition of servitude usually was taken as part of the natural order of the world.  In this context, the attack on slavery in Western culture that grew from the Enlightenment and the social and economic changes in western Europe and its Atlantic colonies at the end of the 18th century was a remarkable turning point in world history. Whether one believes that slavery was an outdated labor form that was incompatible with the industrial capitalism and was therefore abolished, or that it was destroyed because immorality became all too obvious, its demise was quick. In about a century and a half, the moral and religious underpinning of chattel slavery was cut away and its economic justifications were questioned seriously. Although slavery lingered in at leas a few places well into the 20th century, few people were willing to defend the institution publically.  Although slavery historically existed in many places, it has become intimately associated with Africa because of the scope of the Atlantic slave trade and the importance of slavery in forming the modern world system. There was nothing inevitable about Africa’s becoming the primary source of slaves in the modern world. Europeans did use Native Americans and European indentured workers when they could, but historical precedents, maritime technology, and availability combined to make Africa the source of labor for the expanding plantation colonies of Europe.  African slavery obviously played an important role in shaping the modern world. The African slave trade was one of the first truly international trades, and it created an easy access to labor that enabled Europeans to exploit the Americas. Some have argued that it was an important, even a necessary feature in the rise of capitalism and the international division of labor. Others disagree. In this question, as in nearly every other question about modern slavery, controversies still exist.  In the context of African history, the interpretation of slavery is still changing rapidly. A recent and careful estimate of the volume involved in the Atlantic trade (10-12 million) has been questioned seriously, especially by African scholars, who see this new figure as an attempt to downplay the exploitation in Africa. Another debate centers on the impact of the trade on the population and societies within Africa. The slave trade was important to the economy of the Atlantic, but how important was this external trade in Africa itself? Reacting to the preabolitionist European self-justifications that the slave trade was no great crime because Africans had long been familiar with slavery and were selling already enslaved people, early researchers argued that African slavery often was an extension of kinship or other forms of dependency and was quite unlike the chattel slavery of western Europe. But further research has demonstrated that in many African societies, slavery was an integral part of the economy, and although specific conditions sometimes differed greatly from those in the Americas, the servile condition in Africa had much in common to chattel slavery. Slave societies did exist in Africa.  Controversy rages over the extent to which the development of African slavery resulted from the long-term impact of the slave trade and the European demand for captive labor. African societies did not live in isolation from the pressures and examples of the world economy into which they were drawn. The extent to which that contact transformed slavery in Africa is now in question. These controversies among historians reflect current concerns and a realization that the present social and political situation in Africa and in many places in the Americas continues to bear the burden of a historical past in which slavery played an essential role. In evaluating slavery, as in all other historical questions, what we think about the present shapes our inquiry and our interpretation of the past. | **Answer the following questions on another sheet of paper**.   1. What is meant by the idea that slavery was both a predominant (main) form of labor and a secondary form of labor? 2. What are the four types of people who take part in forced labor? 3. What is the main characteristic of coerced (forced) labor? 4. Why was it easier to enslave outsiders to society? 5. Describe three groups that had been enslaved and who they were enslaved by. 6. According to Charles Boxer, why do people develop an attitude of superiority? 7. Why was slavery seen as “necessary”? 8. Why do you think people began to question chattel slavery? 9. Why did slavery become associate with Africa even though it existed in other places? 10. What other groups were used by as slaves by Europeans? 11. How did African slavery shape the modern world? 12. How many Africans were taken in the Atlantic trade? How do African scholars feel about this number? 13. Why do Europeans think that the slave trade was no great crime? 14. Why do you think the slave trade developed? 15. What did you learn from this article that surprised you or you did not know before? |